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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT,
SATURDAY-MONDAY, APRIL 17-19, 2004

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Powell: "A Mistake to say 'No' in Cyprus" - Milliyet (4/17)
New Hamas Leader Assassinated - Milliyet (4/18)
Tension in Najaf - Turkiye (4/18)
Anger over Rantisi Assassination - Sabah
'Time' Lists Erdogan Among World's Most Influential -
Hurriyet
Spain Decides to Withdraw Its Troops From Iraq - Hurriyet
Karamanlis Promises Not to Block Turkey's EU Entry -
Milliyet

OPINION MAKERS

Pressure Increases on Greek-Cypriots - Radikal (4/17)
Taiwan Model For Cyprus - Yeni Safak (4/17)
'Yes' Votes Increase in 'TRNC' - Radikal (4/18)
Erdogan Urges AKP Unity in Cyprus Voting - Cumhuriyet
Polls Indicate Declining 'No' Votes in Greek-Cyprus -
Radikal
Zapatero Orders His Troops to Leave Iraq - Zaman
Stop the Killer (Sharon) - Yeni Safak

BRIEFING

Assassination of Hamas Leader: All weekend papers covered the news of the assassination of Hamas Leader Abdulaziz Rantissi by Israel. Today's 'Yeni Safak' notes that the action has brought international condemnation against Israel. The paper adds that the U.S. is the only country to support the right of Israel to carry out such an attack. The EU, UN and the Islamic world harshly condemned Israel for the killing. "Milliyet" reports that PM Erdogan warned Israel, saying that 'nothing can be achieved by throwing bombs at peace.' The Turkish Foreign Ministry issued a statement condemning what it referred to as 'an illegal assassination.'

Cyprus: Saturday's "Milliyet" reports that US Secretary of State Colin Powell urged both sides to support a 'yes' vote in the Cyprus referendum. Powell added that the Annan plan is a 'golden opportunity' for the island's reunification. Saturday's "Cumhuriyet" notes that the parties in Cyprus are in intense preparations to cope with the new situation that will pertain on the island after April 24. The Turkish Foreign Ministry expects the Turkish side to vote for a 'yes' and the Greek side for a 'no'. Diplomats believe the Greek Cypriots should be punished for saying 'no' to a settlement. The Turkish side is expected to launch an intensive diplomatic campaign in the US, the EU and the UN to gain international recognition of the 'TRNC.' However, a new UN Security Council resolution would be required. Saturday's "Sabah" reports that recent surveys showed that 59.3 percent of Turkish Cypriots would vote 'yes' on April 24. Saturday's "Cumhuriyet" notes that the US Undersecretary of State Marc Grossman phoned Serdar Denktas to say that if the Greek Cypriots say 'no,' the US and EU would take steps to minimize the losses of the Turkish Cypriots. Today's "Cumhuriyet" reports that during the AK party meeting held over the weekend in Antalya, PM Erdogan urged all AKP deputies to support reunification during the parliamentary vote on Cyprus.

EDITORIAL OPINION

"A catastrophe looming"

Fehmi Koru wrote in the Islamist/opinion maker "Yeni Safak" (4/19): "The Israeli violence in Palestine is disrupting global balances. . . How can US expect from people horrified by the incidents in Palestine, understanding for the Greater Middle East project - an initiative Americans have been developing as an exit strategy in their fight against terrorism. Sharon has exploited to the utmost the upcoming presidential elections in the US. The extent of Bush's tolerance for Tel Aviv is taking him to the end of the road in politics by deepening the difficulties in Iraq. Seems that catastrophe is at doorstep for Bush."

"Greater Chaos Project"

Ferai Tinc opined in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (4/19): "Sharon got written guarantees from Bush to keep the Israeli settlements in the West Bank before an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. . . Before withdrawing, Israel will eradicate Hamas. The plan is obvious: Israel will withdraw from Gaza, and a Palestine state will be established. But this new state's borders will be defined by Israel. The Greater Middle East project may have a clause like, 'Israel's security will be fully guaranteed before establishment of a Palestine state.' . . However, the killing of Rantisi took people in Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Jordan and Egypt to the streets. How can you expect to drain a so-called marsh through actions that fan enmity against US and Israel? . . One may think that the Greater Middle East project has got room for chaos scenarios."

"US may create new Saddams"

Mustafa Balbay commented in the intellectual/opinion maker "Cumhuriyet" (4/19): "US has managed to unite all Iraqis except the Kurds against itself. . . US is striving to make the Iraqi Shiites act independent of Iran. However, regional scales prove that this will be a difficult task to attain. Muqtada es-Sadr has called for solidarity against Americans. . . Those resisting Americans do not want to establish democracy, but their own administrations. Eventually, neither Americans nor resisters target democracy. US has toppled Saddam, but will probably create new Saddams."

"Why should Turks say `yes'"

Etyen Mahcupyan observed in the conservative/intellectual "Zaman" (4/19): "The latest Annan Plan meets almost all expectations of the Turkish side. . . Greek Cypriots will belatedly acquire their property rights in due time while the Turkish side will gain in detail a brand new legal status. A federal Cyprus republic will automatically bring international recognition for the constituent state in the north, the TRNC. . . A solution will make Greece and Greece Cyprus natural supporters of Turkey's EU drive. . . The UN-backed plan gives Turks extraordinary rights compared to the 1960 Agreement. . . We must not surrender to selfishness and fanaticism under a nationalist disguise that actually disregards our national interests."

EDELMAN